

Vicksburg National Military Park

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Vicksburg National Military Park



Park Myths

The Five Faces



Perhaps the most popular tale of strange occurrences in the Vicksburg National Military Park is the **"Bleeding Faces of the Pennsylvania Memorial."**

Dedicated in 1906, five bronze medallions on the main shaft of the memorial portray each Pennsylvanian unit's commander (from left to right): Colonel John I. Curtin, Lieutenant Colonel Thomas S. Brenholtz, Colonel John F. Hartranft, Colonel Daniel

Leasure, and Captain George W. Durrell. Legend has it that if you drive to the monument at midnight and shine lights on the five faces, they will cry blood. There is a logical reason for this myth, however. When it rains, water collects behind the bronze medallions. Rust and minerals stain the water red, so it appears that the faces are crying blood. *Well - that's what the unbelievers say!*

Old Abe



Another popular tale centers around the Wisconsin Memorial and its bronze eagle named **"Old Abe."** Old Abe was a bald eagle that served as the mascot for the 8th Wisconsin Infantry. Named after President Abraham Lincoln, Old Abe was proudly carried into battle tethered to a five-foot perch painted red, white, and blue. When Old Abe received an honorable discharge in 1864, he was a veteran of 42 clashes and was presented to the State of Wisconsin. The famous war eagle was an honored resident of the Wisconsin State Capitol until he died from smoke inhalation in 1881. Old Abe was then mounted and displayed in the capitol until a second fire destroyed his remains.

Today, Old Abe is memorialized by a 6-foot bronze statue that sits

atop the Wisconsin Memorial. Legend has it that Old Abe "flew the coop" in 1941 when one morning the statue was found lying on the ground beside the memorial. According to local residents, no one attended church in Vicksburg the next day - instead, they gathered at the park to pet the eagle's head!

Everyone assumed lightning struck the monument and caused Old Abe's descent; however, no one actually witnessed the incident. To make sure Old Abe stays atop the memorial, a lightning rod now runs to the ground on the monument. However, this may be ineffective, for it is said that once a month Old Abe spreads his wings and flies away over the battlefield.

General Grant



In an area of the battlefield known as Grant's Circle, General Ulysses S. Grant is memorialized sitting atop "Kangaroo," the horse that accompanied him during the siege of Vicksburg. According to legend, every full moon General Grant rides his horse through Vicksburg National Military Park. Since Vicksburg is considered by many to be Grant's

greatest military accomplishment, perhaps the Union general wants to ride around and relive his past glory! No one knows for sure. It is also said that if you are wandering around Grant's Circle at night, the General's eyes will glow green and he may tip his hat at you!

Digger



There is also the story of Digger. His real name was Tom Mallory, an Irish miner caught in Vicksburg by the advancing Union troops during the Civil War. Digger took advantage of Vicksburg's misfortune and started excavating caves. A captain in the Louisiana militia employed Digger to construct a cave to shelter his wife and children. Digger, who hurried the job, picked an unsuitable site for the cave. Not long after, a mortar shell exploded over the cave, causing it to collapse in the children's chamber. He and others tried to dig the children out, but the cave kept collapsing. Finally, everyone knew it was too late. The children were never found. That was the last day Tom Mallory would rest for his life and beyond.

closer at the opening, he saw a light shining. Digger was frozen in horror as he watched the dirty, decomposed body of a child crawl toward him. A second, smaller figure pushed through the opening and then stood grim, with eyes protruding from its sockets and white bones exposed from hands and arms. The crew found Digger in the dark whimpering, mumbling, "the children, the children." The Confederate crew looked through the opening digger had made just in time to see the lit fuse racing toward a stack of powder. They tried to get Digger out, but hugging his shovel, he was paralyzed. His shaky voice repeated, "No, no, the children."

The Confederates later hired Digger to design and supervise a countermine to intersect the tunnel being built by Union soldiers. Digger, alone in the countermine one day, extinguished his lamp since he felt his shovel punch through the Union tunnel. Looking

The powder gallery exploded. Digger was never found. Sometimes his old miner's lamp flickers in one of the hollows. Evidence of freshly dug holes prove his soul wanders the park. He will never rest until he finds the children.